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A HITTITE CYLINDER IN THE MUSÉE FOL AT GENEVA.

The Musée Fol at Geneva possesses a certain number of Assyro-Babylonian intaglios, and amongst others a cylinder in lapis-lazuli (48 by 15 cm.), which is of the deepest interest for Orientalists. F. Lenormant attempted an interpretation, which was printed in the Catalogue published in 1875.¹ He hinted at a royal cylinder, which of course would have added greatly to its value; but, according to him, the characters were so faint, so indistinct, that he did not venture to propose an identification where fancy would have held a larger place than reality. He thought, nevertheless, that the god *Nergal* himself could be recognized in the winged figure.

M. Ménant, who by his remarkable works stands in the front rank of Assyriologists, during his visit to Geneva in 1882 tried, but vainly, to find the royal sign. Since then, by taking many impressions of the same character and by the most careful attention, he succeeded in reconstituting the whole, except a few of the most indistinct signs. He thus became certain, that it was an Assyrian text containing an invocation to the god *Marduk*; but it was evident that it contained no royal sign. This fact is far from diminishing its value: our cylinder is one of the finest specimens of a series of intaglios still but little known and attributed to the Hittites. We give the subject twice (*fig. 13*) so as to show the inscription: it represents a figure whose head-dress is a sort of pointed tiara; he is clad in a short tunic fastened around the waist by a girdle; in each hand he holds a small animal, head downwards; his feet rest on winged chimeras which bend under the weight of his body. Behind him is a tree with three branches coming out of a sort of basket, and above, in the interval, is an inscription of four unequal lines in cuneiform characters.

¹ *Musée Fol. Etudes d'Art et d'Archéologie*, Vol. II, p. 79, pl. II, fig. 4 (No. 1386).

Though the characters, as just remarked, do not yield a good impression, M. Ménant considers as accurate the transcription which he gives.² We have here an Assyrian text which contains an invocation to the god Marduk, beginning thus: "In presence of the god Marduk, the lord, my master."

Lenormant has given the transcription and its explanation, as follows: (1) *Ina arduti Nergal kunuk*—(2) *Zbni*—(3) *abal Na*—(4) (signs of titles of functions) *sar* (here a name of country impossible to read). He translated it thus: *In the service of Nergal* (the Babylonian Masongro) *seal of Zbni . . . son of Na . . .* (here a title of some unknown function of the king) . . . , (then the name of a country which cannot be read). Lenormant also



FIG. 13.

hinted that the winged god, subduer of monsters, represented on the cylinder might very well be Nergal himself. But, according to M. Ménant, the word *arduti* is not to be found, nor is the ideogram of Nergal, or *kunuk* (fig. 14). He says, "The first line, such as we have reconstructed it, may be considered as correct; as to the third, Lenormant mistook the sign *i* for that of 'filiation.' Finally, the signs of our fourth line are right; the translation is very difficult on account of the last group, the form of which is not doubtful, but its signification is still unknown; and, as concerns the word *sar*, king, it is most decidedly not there, nor is the word *mat*, country."

The figure engraved on the cylinder is then undoubtedly that of

² Cf. *Glyptique Orientale*, Vol. II, p. 116.

the god Marduk, the Merodach of the Bible, and not Nergal. We agree with M. Ménant in attributing the style of the subject to the art of the Hittites: the position, the dress of the figures, the animals which support it, everything shows the influence of this people, traces of whom are to be seen at several points of Asia Minor, at Boghaz-Keui,³ Eujuk, Karabel, Birejik, and Jerablus, from Carchemish to the shores of the Aegean sea.

The cylinder of the Musée Fol takes its place by the side of the intaglios of Asia Minor. These intaglios are very numerous, and the work of M. Sorlin d'Origny on the specimens of his collection, which we hope soon to see published, allows us to look for many a point of comparison. Lenormant enumerated among the plates of Lajard's *Culte de Mithra* seventeen cylinders which he attributed to the Hittites, and M. Ménant accepts this attribution for the greater part of them. Those which the French savant assimilates to

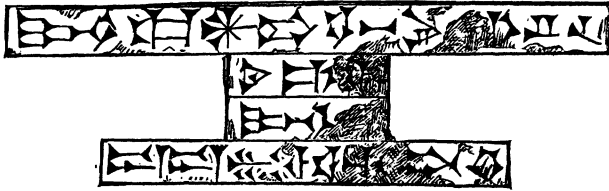


FIG. 14.

that of the Musée Fol, most of which are still inedited, seem to be of real interest from the point of view of epigraphy. The presence of Assyrian and Hittite wedges opens a wide field of investigation, as on one of them⁴ are to be found, in cuneiform characters, names which have no Shemitic form, while the Hittite writing, isolated, and looking almost like an ornament added to the design, sufficiently indicates the origin of the intaglios, even if this were not proved by the workmanship itself. We need not wonder at the widely-spread use of the cylinder among the Hittites. That mercantile nation, in

³The ancient Pteria.—There is no need to mention here all the works written on this subject; it is enough, we believe, to cite the names of William Hayes Ward, Wright, Sayce, who first took up those ungrateful researches of such vivid interest for Oriental science.

⁴J. MÉNANT. *Glyptique Orientale*, Vol. II, p. 117. No. 110.

constant intercourse with its neighbors, had felt the Assyro-Babylonian influence, and accepted this method of signature, imposed by the mighty civilization which ruled the Eastern world. The Hittite terracotta seals belonging to M. G. Schlumberger denote the use of clay to seal or label commercial transactions.⁵

To return to our cylinder, as we have stated in the beginning, it belongs to the style of the finest Hittite monuments, and shows the same distinctive marks that are to be seen on them. The figure supported by chimeras reminds us of the divinities at Boghaz-Keui, the pointed head-dress is also similar to their high tiaras.

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⁵ RYLANDS. *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, Feb. 1884; and *Transactions of the Society of Bibl. Arch.*, Vol. VIII, part 3, p. 422.